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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CANBERRA 001071

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SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA WELCOMES THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON
THE WAY FORWARD IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

REF: SECSTATE 122731

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Daniel A. Clune. Reasons 1.4 (a)
) (b) (d)

[¶1.](#) (C/NF) Australia welcomes the President's announcement of the way forward in Afghanistan and is committed to providing support, Foreign Minister Smith told Ambassador Bleich December 2. Ambassador Bleich delivered refTel message prior to the President's speech. In addition to the discussion on Afghanistan at the President's November 30 meeting with PM Rudd, Smith said that Secretary of Defense Gates had called Australian Defense Minister Faulkner on December 1 (local) to brief on the President's Afghanistan strategy. Smith stressed that Australia will stand by the United States and will provide additional assistance, while noting that Defense Minister Faulkner would provide a public statement of support on behalf of the Australian Government following the President's speech. In response to the Ambassador's statement that he understood that Australia was thinking in terms of providing an additional 125 civilians, including a sizeable Australian Federal Police contingent, Smith said this sounded about right, though he was not up on the details.

[¶2.](#) (SBU) Defense Minister John Faulkner gave a press conference after the President's speech at which he stressed Australia's unwavering support for the United States and the people of Afghanistan. Faulkner emphasized that Australia welcomes the U.S. commitment of an additional 30,000 troops along with an additional civilian effort. He said Australia is confident that the President's new approach will provide better outcomes for the people of Afghanistan. Australia has been involved in consultations on the revised strategy at political and military levels, according to the Defense Minister, who said he had spoken with Defense Secretary Gates December 1 and that the Secretary had reiterated his appreciation for Australia's contribution. Faulkner said that the Chief of Defense Force had been instructed by the Government to review the composition of Australia's troop commitment to make sure it best supports the new strategy.

[¶3.](#) (SBU) Prime Minister Rudd also released a statement on the President's announcement.

Begin text of PM Rudd's statement

Prime Minister welcomes President Obama's announcement of a new strategy for Afghanistan

The Australian Government welcomes President Obama's

announcement of a new strategy for Afghanistan as the best way forward to provide security for the Afghan people and to train sufficient Afghan security forces over time to transfer responsibility to the Afghans themselves.

The President has consulted closely with Australia and other allies on the review into Afghanistan strategy conducted by the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force, General Stanley McChrystal.

In responding to the review, the President has developed a credible strategy designed to achieve success, a key element of which will be an integrated civilian-military approach designed to deliver security to the population and better governance to the people of Afghanistan.

The strategy includes an emphasis on training and QThe strategy includes an emphasis on training and transferring responsibility to Afghan security forces and civilian authorities.

The President's strategy is entirely consistent with the approach that Australia is taking in Afghanistan where we are working to train the Afghan security forces so that responsibility for security can be transferred to them.

At the same time we will increase our Police training and civilian development assistance. Australia, like the United States, is committed to a transition to Afghan responsibility as soon as conditions allow.

Australia expects the Government of Afghanistan to play its

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part in doing what is necessary to improve security and the delivery of Government services to its people.

The Australian Government announced in April that we would increase our military commitment to Afghanistan by around 40 per cent to around 1550 troops. This increase is now almost complete.

End text.

BLEICH